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Partitioned Lives: Migrants, Refugees, Citizens in India and Pakistan, 1947-65

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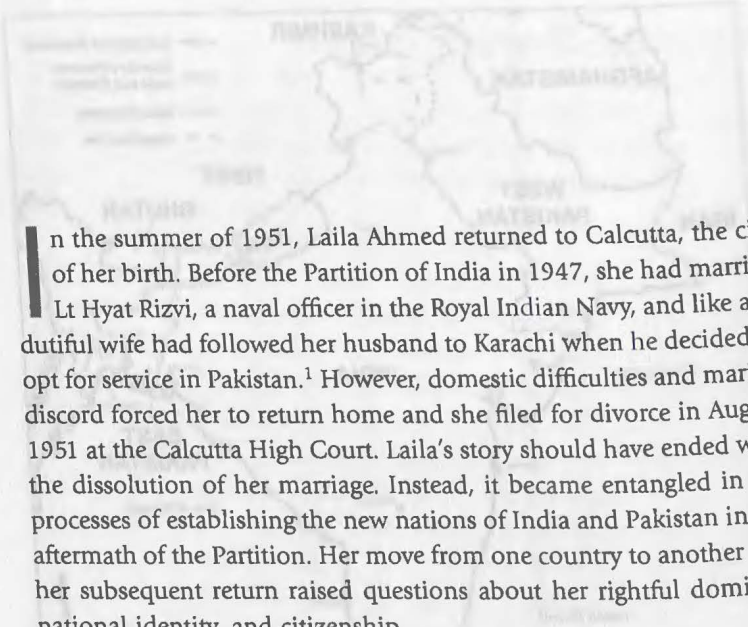
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Introduction

Partitioned Histories, Divided Identities



In the summer of 1951, Laila Ahmed returned to Calcutta, the city of her birth. Before the Partition of India in 1947, she had married Lt Hyat Rizvi, a naval officer in the Royal Indian Navy, and like any dutiful wife had followed her husband to Karachi when he decided to opt for service in Pakistan.¹ However, domestic difficulties and marital discord forced her to return home and she filed for divorce in August 1951 at the Calcutta High Court. Laila's story should have ended with the dissolution of her marriage. Instead, it became entangled in the processes of establishing the new nations of India and Pakistan in the aftermath of the Partition. Her move from one country to another and her subsequent return raised questions about her rightful domicile, national identity, and citizenship.

In the absence of any rules and regulations that defined Indian citizenship legally, Laila's status within India was guided by the Succession Act of 1925² which dictated that the domicile of the wife followed that of her husband. Indian officials in Calcutta thus determined that Laila Ahmed had Pakistani domicile until the last date of her marriage and had, by virtue of living with her husband until that date, become a Pakistani citizen. However, they argued that with the dissolution of her marriage, she did not automatically regain her Indian citizenship. She had to re-acquire this nationality. The matter was further complicated by the fact that until the Indian Citizenship Act was passed in 1955, the official policy in India dictated: 'no one can acquire Indian nationality except by birth or marriage.'³ Laila was thus in identity limbo, one of a growing number of people without nations who were unsure whether they were citizens of India or

Pakistan, because of the ambiguities associated with what determined such citizenship.

The processes of establishing new national orders in the aftermath of the Partition entailed that minorities—Hindus in Pakistan and Muslims in India—had to renegotiate their identities as rightful citizens. This book focuses on minorities such as Laila and examines issues of territoriality, identity, migration, citizenship, and the subsequent reordering of national identities in India and East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh). The narrative begins in 1947 with the Partition, and ends with the second Indo-Pakistan war in 1965, by which time citizens of each country had to make their permanent domicile in one or the other country.

There were three partitions in 1947—of British India and of the provinces of Bengal and Punjab—that created the new nation-states of India and a spatially fragmented West and East Pakistan. It engendered the largest recorded population transfer in history amidst horrific mass violence. Between 1946 and 1965, nearly 9 million Hindus and Sikhs moved into India and approximately 5 million Muslims moved to both parts of Pakistan.⁴ Partition as the twin facet of freedom remains an apocalyptic event within the South Asian popular imagination, reinforced by family and personal memories of violence, exile, movement, and resettlement.

Bengal's Partition, which is the focus of this book, entailed that approximately two-thirds of its area was carved out to create East Pakistan. It produced the longest international border between two countries in South Asia and millions of new citizens who were marked as majorities and minorities based on religious demography. Unlike the Punjab division, with its large-scale horrific violence and swift exchange of minority populations, the Bengal Partition witnessed protracted migration of Hindu and Muslim minorities engendered partly by routine small-scale violence and partly by the new states' attempts to decide the fate of their respective minority populations. It meant that it took almost two decades after the Partition of India and Pakistan to map and delineate their territories, determine who could and could not be their citizens, and implement laws which would constitute the national identities of their respective citizens. A focus on the *longue duree* of Partition's impact not only allows us to better realize the imperfect and unfinished nature of post-Partition initiatives

by the new States of India and Pakistan, but also to put in historical context, the actions of ordinary men and women living during these extraordinary times.

Rather than framing 1947 as the 'break' between colonial and post-colonial histories of South Asia, or as the year that marked the 'moment of arrival',⁵ this book joins new histories of the Partition,⁶ which sees it as a process rather than a single event, thereby unsettling time and region-bound nationalized histories. Partition continued to influence and modify State policies and people's lives beyond 1947. Further, the book uses a cross border analysis to show that rather than dissociating from each other after 1947, both India and East Pakistan were intricately linked in their projects to establish respective post-Partition national orders.

Two specific understandings about their new citizens in divided Bengal informed most official policies of the Indian and East Pakistani states. First, they continued to operate within colonial understandings of community identity as primarily a function of religion. Thus, state policies ossified religious affiliation and viewed their citizenry as either a member of the majority and minority communities. Second, both states perceived of a specific paradigm of Partition violence, which viewed the large-scale and cataclysmic riots in Punjab of 1947–8 as standard, informed, and influenced policies with regard to both minority nationals and refugees. Since the small-scale and chronic nature of violence in post-Partition Bengal remained outside this paradigm, the Bengal Partition became, in the eyes of the post-colonial states, a site of illegitimate victimhood and unwarranted migration.

In post-Partition Bengal, the discourse over citizenship animated the project of 'nationalizing the nation'.⁷ Who were the rightful citizens of the new nations and how could such claims be justified? Did minorities, the Hindus in East Pakistan and the Muslims in India, by crossing the international border become refugees and have automatic rights to demand citizenship? I argue that the new nation states or their minorities did not *assume* such identities and issues of citizenship. Rather, they were *produced* categories, debated within the hallowed halls of officialdom in Delhi, Calcutta, and Dacca, and given legal sanction through ordinances and laws debated and passed by parliamentary and state legislations.

Defining categories of identity such as evacuees, refugees, displaced persons, aliens, and infiltrators was a major element of the process of establishing post-Partition national orders and turning colonial subjects into national citizens. Further, these identities were produced discursively, mediated through the actions of officials located at the periphery of the nation, especially at the borders and diplomatic missions. Refugee documents, border slips, and passports became the means through which the Indian State sought to differentiate between refugees, migrants, aliens, and citizens. Legislations surrounding the rights to own and transfer property became intrinsic within the renegotiations of nationality in East Pakistan. Implicit within these redefinitions were the attempts of each state to establish a minority citizen's loyalty to the state. The determination of such loyalty was susceptible to contingent political, social, and economic contexts and was predicated on successful negotiations between minorities and the nation states.

While Indian and East Pakistani state policies contributed substantially in constituting new identities in divided Bengal, minority citizens were by no means passive bystanders to such top-down processes. Rather, as the book shows, minority citizens—Hindus in East Pakistan and Muslims in West Bengal—repeatedly contested official attempts to define national territory and identity through their persistent movement across the border, protests against requisition of houses, rallies to demand rehabilitation, and continuation of family ties across the border. Moreover, it was the everyday interactions between majority and minority communities, now predicated on new ideas of belonging and nationality, that produced a protracted state of uncertainty and fear amongst the latter, and continued to influence contingent decisions to move from one's home and to become evacuees or refugees in another country.

PARTITION AND ITS PRE-HISTORIES

The extensive scholarship on the Partition is problematic in several crucial aspects. The Partition serves as a template for the reinvention of national histories within India and Pakistan. In these national narratives, Partition is represented as the momentous culmination of an anti-colonial national struggle that acceded to the division for the sake of a larger Indian unity, or as a unilinear movement towards

national self-representations of distinct communities. Paradoxically, while Partition persists as the defining moment for those engaged in reinterpreting cultural and national identities in contemporary South Asia, Partition historiography remains trapped within a teleological and chronological barrier of 1947. This axiomatic end date for historical enquiry has led to the creation of 'pre-histories' of the Partition⁸—to an obsessive focus on the high politics that preceded the event in an attempt to explain *why* it happened⁹ and to assign 'responsibility'¹⁰ either to the negotiations between the British and the major Indian political parties—the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League—or to the actions of leading political figures such as Lord Mountbatten, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.¹¹ The contradictions inherent within anti-colonial nationalism, between nation, religion, and group identity, were sought to be resolved through the construction of Muslim separatism or 'communalism' as the evil doppelganger of 'secular' nationalism.

In the late 1980s, historical enquiry on the Partition shifted its focus from the national to the provincial arena.¹² However, the historiographical focus remained firmly directed at the level of provincial high politics. In the case of Bengal, such enquiry involved a reassessment of provincial identity politics in the 1940s *vis-à-vis* national politics. The political dissensions between the all-India platforms of the Congress and the League and their provincial counterparts are now well documented¹³ as scholars focused on different points within Bengali politics that marked the decisive turn away from anti-colonial nationalism towards the path to separatism or communalism.¹⁴

One of the paradigmatic problems that has haunted the historiography of the Partition is this communal–national binary that seeks to explain communalism as the causal force that, at the expense of nationalism, marked the inevitable path towards Partition.¹⁵ In the case of Bengal, one of the main proponents of the communalism–nationalism binary is Joya Chatterji, who explains the Bengal Partition as an event that Hindu communalism engendered. She argues that the public demands for a separate 'homeland for Bengali Hindus' on the eve of Partition reflected the end result of a decisive shift 'from nationalism to communalism' that had marked

Bengal politics and identity from the 1930s.¹⁶ Chatterji attributes a central role to elite Bengali Hindus in spearheading the campaign that led to the fateful division of the province in 1947. Having identified the main actors in the promotion of Hindu communalism, she then makes the problematic leap to make the case for all Bengali Hindus who, in her view, were not 'passive bystanders'.¹⁷ Chatterji's larger argument provides a convenient historical trajectory to this colonial representation and seeks to explain the religious demographic calculations behind the Partition as a process that reflected inherent divisions within the Indian socio-political milieu. Partition, thus, was inevitable not only because Indian leaders such as Nehru, Patel, and Jinnah forced the British hand but also because of the intrinsic and age-old communal fault lines. Such arguments not only tend to deflect the role of British politics in India, but they also provide no space for the examination of alternatives to the nationalism-communalism binary.¹⁸

That provincial politics in Bengal saw an increasing presence of elite Hindu and Muslim communalism cannot be denied. From the 1930s onwards, Hindu organizations began to mobilize lower-caste groups, such as the Namasudras in Bengal, within the larger Hindu fold.¹⁹ The subsequent shifts in class and community relations were critical in garnering support for the Partition. Organizing the Muslim peasantry in Bengal along communitarian lines also involved mobilization along class divisions.²⁰ These factors do not necessarily indicate that public discourse and political rhetoric in the 1930s and the 1940s assumed a Hindu or Muslim identity at the expense of anti-colonial nationalist agitation. Rather, nationalist leaders had strategically deployed both Hindu and Muslim religious symbols in their efforts to incorporate the masses since at least 1905. The anti-colonial nationalism of both Bengali Hindus and Muslims had always been influenced and informed by religion and religious symbols.²¹ However, a critical distinction needs to be made between the communitarian struggles of non-elite social groups in which religion played an important organizational role and the communal mobilizations within provincial politics informed by colonial constructions of politically representative religious groups.²²

Religion as the *raison d'être* of the politics of Partition becomes problematic when the focus shifts to the eastern part of Bengal. The

East Bengal/East Pakistan story is subsumed within a broader schema of Partition historiography that fails to appreciate that for some Muslim Bengalis, the Partition was a way to emerge from Hindu domination and experience cultural autonomy as a Muslim and a Bengali.²³ However, such explanations lead to yet another kind of pre-history that seeks to explain the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 as a repudiation of arguments in favour of Muslim or Hindu communalism. Unfortunately, the narrative of Bangladeshi nationhood has not only erased the Partition of 1947 from public memory there, but also rewritten the history to locate the birth of the Muslim Bengali 'national self-consciousness' from the first Partition of Bengal in 1905.²⁴

In recent years, academic scholarship has shifted away from the *pre-histories* of Partition to its immediate impact, from causality to 'lived experience',²⁵ in order to render a human and gendered narrative of the Partition and its aftermath.²⁶ Ethnographic studies focus on the period leading up to the Partition and its immediate repercussions on the experiences of the displaced and on the narratives of the horrific acts of rape, violence, and murder, both between and within communities in the Punjab. These studies have conclusively established the gendered nature of Partition violence as it targeted women as symbols of their community and family honour.²⁷ The most important contribution of these writings has been to draw attention to the disjuncture between national histories of the Partition and the personal narratives of 1947 and to reveal the multiple ways in which the latter contest and subvert the former. Communities and local traditions reconstituted themselves through the language of Partition violence that privileged a particular reconstruction of the past.²⁸ Collective and individual memories of violence are also mediated along caste, class, and gendered lines. Scholarly enquiry has thus shifted emphasis from the structural analysis of Partition violence to the analysis of modalities of memory and forgetting of such brutality.

The focus is now on Partition and its impact on subcontinental nations, cities, and their citizens.²⁹ Partition and its outcomes, as recent research shows, were products of hasty planning within high politics and contingent decisions of millions who attempted to make sense of their new status as citizens of new countries after 1947. Rather than neatly marking the end of colonialism and the beginning of nationhood in India and Pakistan, Partition, within this scholarly shift,

appears as unfinished, messy, and protracted, continuing to influence the identities of those who were the most affected by the division.

However, like the earlier binaries of communalism versus nationalism, recent scholarship has tended to examine post-colonial nationhood through yet another binary: secular state versus non-secular, especially in the case of India. The focus has been on examining the Hindu majoritarian underpinnings of Indian secularism and the imperfect implementations of such ideals when it came to its citizens.³⁰ Zamindar's excellent study of the aftermath of Partition in Karachi and Delhi falls within this category in its examination of official policies designed to control migration after Partition. She captures the uncertain status of those caught on the *wrong* side of the border, as they negotiated the documentary terrain of permits, passports, and evacuee property that were instituted by both India and Pakistan to prevent migration and return of Muslims in Pakistan and India respectively. In the process, she questions both the proclaimed secular identity of the new Indian State as well as the assertions of the Pakistani state that it was the homeland of *all* Muslims.³¹

Zamindar's central thesis of 'governmentality' as primary in engendering national difference sits awkwardly when one shifts focus to the division in the east. In post-Partition Bengal, state legislations were kept to a minimum³² but efforts to control the chronic and protracted migration produced parallel ideas about nationality. Here, too, as another recent book by Joya Chatterji highlights,³³ Muslim minorities in West Bengal were ghettoized and dispossessed as in Delhi, and minorities, both Hindus and Muslims, had to juggle multiple identities as they crossed the border or attempted to return home. However, even as they became a minority, Chatterji argues, in subsequent years, the Muslims in West Bengal became critical to the political balance within the province as no political party could afford to ignore this significant vote bank. Similarly, Hindu refugees from East Pakistan were active agents who demanded rehabilitation from the Indian State as a matter of human right and became significant in the emergence of Left politics in West Bengal.³⁴

This book joins both Zamindar and Chatterji in their examination of the impact of the Partition on those living in the divided regions. However, it differs from such scholarship on two crucial aspects. First, although it examines official policies in India and East Pakistan

that were significant in defining and imposing national identities on minorities, this book, additionally, shows that contingent actions and decisions of lower-level functionaries, minorities, and refugees were central to how such new configurations of citizenship and belonging came into being. Rather than being passive victims of state legislations, these ordinary citizens manipulated legal clauses to better able to manage their status, and negotiated, complained, and sometimes ignored official dictates. Their ultimate migration and/or dispossession in the subsequent decades of the Partition were a result of the combined effects of state policies and individual and group action contingent on the continuation of routine violence in the region. In this respect, this book highlights the role of Partition itself, rather than of regional particularities, in reconstituting national identities for minorities.

Second, this book takes a cross-border perspective in its analysis of both official policies and individual actions. It shows that minorities, be it Hindus in East Pakistan or Muslims in West Bengal, faced similar sets of discriminatory circumstances and questions of national belonging. A cross-border analysis further allows to provide a counter to India and Pakistan's projects of nationalizing their respective citizens by showing that for most ordinary men and women, the border served utilitarian purposes rather than defining the limits of each nation. New citizenships were, for them, functional at best and they retained old ties of wealth, kinship, and local identity even after new nationalities had been imposed on them through the documentary regime of passports and visas.

The aftermath of the Partition in Bengal presents us with several ways to understand the larger impact of the Partition counter to what have become the two *normative* paradigms of the Partition experience in South Asia. First, Partition in these analyses remains regionally confined in their analyses of the Punjab division.³⁵ Second, they assume that for the most part, the large-scale violence engendered migrations and renegotiations of citizenship and belonging. Although violence was integral to how the Partition affected people's lives, it was not, as new studies have revealed, the only experience.³⁶

The low-scale routine violence in divided Bengal fits awkwardly within this effort to represent and rewrite a specific subcontinental partition experience. This is not to suggest that the Partition of Bengal

has not received any attention within academic scholarship, but such attention has been primarily focused on the rehabilitation of refugees from East Pakistan into India.

This book argues that such differences in relief and rehabilitation policies stem from the understanding of violence as cataclysmic and physical and the attempt to define refugees as victims of such violence. This understanding of Partition violence, which characterized the Punjab experience but not the small-scale chronic violence in Bengal, influenced refugee rehabilitation policies of the Indian State. The Indian State thus considered the migration of Bengali refugees to be unwarranted, and consequently viewed these individuals as illegitimate candidates for rehabilitation. It viewed these refugees primarily as economic migrants rather than as victims of violence or simply as persecuted Hindu minorities. Thus, the book suggests a different, more complicated understanding of the constitution of secular ideals in the early years of Independence.

The scholarship on refugee rehabilitation itself remains problematic, as researchers view refugees as an undifferentiated mass whose experiences of migration and resettlement are similar. While the socio-economic background of those crossing the borders were influential in their relocation, the timing of their migration, whether after 1947, or after the riots of 1950, or beyond, was critical to how they were viewed by the state and their subsequent rehabilitation. In actuality, the reconstitution of identities depended on a variety of factors, some of which were created in collusion with official policies of the new nation states.³⁷

This book counters such normative understandings of the aftermath of the Partition, by examining the impact of open borders, laissez-faire state policies, routine violence, and continuous and protracted migration in the east. It argues that it was migration in the east that forced India and Pakistan to craft legislations such as the passport system that ascribed nationality to their minority citizens. However, the implementation of these legislations continued in a piecemeal fashion, and minorities in the region consistently faced questions of loyalty as they negotiated between their residential and national identity. However, they were often active agents in reshaping their new identities as they contingently moved back and forth across the border but kept open the channels of negotiation with the state for

their rights as citizens, evacuees, and refugees. The aftermath of the Partition in Bengal thus offers a better template to understand the protracted processes engendered in 1947. Here, the border remained porous even after 1952, citizenship continued to be contested even after the Citizenship Act of 1955, refugees still continued to come after 1958 when the last refugee camp was shut down, and ownership of property was disputed between the state and who it termed as evacuees until 1965 when the such property became enemy property.

NEW STATES AND THEIR CITIZENS

Establishing 'national' states was the primary task at hand after the Partition for India and Pakistan. Both states deployed a range of symbolic, discursive, and actual methods that produced states as authoritative entities, which controlled the political and social life of each nation. In the Indian context, the 'practice of post-colonial nation-statism' involved visual representations, ritual practices of commemoration such as the Republic Day parades, discourses on science and technology, and urban planning designs as ways of constructing the new nation-state.³⁸ Although far apart, West and East Pakistan also embarked on the process of nationalizing their identity through the declaration of Urdu as the national language, creating a 'political economy of defence'³⁹ and weighing the economy in favour of the West at the expense of the east.⁴⁰ In East Pakistan the authorities focused on new legislations affecting people and property in the divided provinces, the appointment of new personnel to implement these policies, and the investment in, and construction of, new infrastructure to enable the control and dispersal of state policies at the periphery.

The legislations that directly impacted the partitioned regions aimed both at delineating the nations' boundaries and controlling access to its territories. More importantly, they were instrumental in categorizing citizens—those who belonged and those who did not. Both India and Pakistan instituted the permit system in 1948 and the passport and visa scheme in 1952 that allowed certain groups to refugees to enter and prevented others from returning back home.⁴¹ In addition, evacuee property laws in both states promised guardianship of abandoned properties until the time their owners returned, and requisition laws targeted these very properties as means to rehabilitate refugees from

the other side. Migration and property became *nationalized*: the act of moving from one state to another meant the relinquishing of one's property, indicating a sort of declaration of intent, a 'natural' inclination towards the other nation. Interestingly, the Permit system was not put in operation in the eastern sector with both governments preferring to keep that border open until the establishment of the Passports in 1952. Further, the Indian Evacuee Property Legislations did not encompass properties of refugees in the eastern zone. In spite of such differential policies, Hindus in East Pakistan and Muslims in West Bengal and Bihar were prone to be seen as trans-territorial citizens whose loyalty to their respective nations would always be suspect.

While the focus on official policy and different legislations provides a window into the creation of post-Partition nations, it is important to examine the operational aspects of these policies. How did these legislations, enacted in the capital cities of Delhi, Karachi, and Dhaka, translate and affect the people they aimed to categorize? Who were responsible for their implementation? The book focuses on the actions of intermediary officials who were entrusted with the implementation of these laws, which sought to create strong and centralized post-Partition states.⁴² These low-level officials, often located at a distance from central and higher authorities, had substantial discretionary power in their districts and towns to interpret the law as they saw fit.⁴³

Moreover, they were crucial in determining who could and could not belong to the nation. This is not to argue that these bureaucrats necessarily had little regard for the law and were autocratic in their actions. But in state-society relations, one must recognize the inherent flexibility of human actions. In the case of divided Bengal, the interactions of these low-level officials were often informed by economic and religious imperatives. Thus, even though official policies and legislations were avowedly non-discriminatory on paper, they often followed discriminatory paths when implemented by some of these officials.

State-society relationships are further complicated when one looks at one of the universal and characteristic features of the modern nation state: its citizenship, defined primarily through the group membership of its citizens within a definite territorial unit. Territory and membership are closely related—the modern state is

simultaneously a territorial organization and a personal association.⁴⁴ Citizenship is not a mere reflex of residence; it is an enduring personal status that is not generated by passing or extended residence alone and does not lapse with temporary or prolonged absence.⁴⁵

In the case of divided Bengal, citizenship followed a different path. Migration from one territorial unit to another, even if temporary, defined one's nationality; it signalled the intent of acquiring a new citizenship and simultaneously giving up the original identity. In the years between the Partition and the enactment of appropriate legislation laying down the regulations and definitions of citizenship in India and Pakistan, individuals who crossed the border had to constantly negotiate the ambiguities surrounding their migration, residence, and putative and 'natural' national identity.

The initial policy of the Government of India had been to allow citizenship rights to those migrants who officially declared their intention to become citizens of India and later acquired the necessary documentation. Getting one's name on the electoral rolls was one of the primary ways to ensure subsequent citizenship rights. Such a policy presented two contradictory dilemmas for Indian authorities. On the one hand, by allowing any migrant to acquire citizenship, it could limit its rehabilitation responsibilities towards the refugees. On the other hand, the government feared that such a policy might encourage Hindu minorities to opt for migration in such large numbers that would not only create an economic strain but also threaten the secular façade of the Indian State. In order to stem the continuing tide of migration, the Indian government fixed a time limit by which a refugee/migrant had to declare his/her intention to stay in India,⁴⁶ and in the early 1950s, declared that inclusion within the electoral rolls would not guarantee automatic citizenship rights.

No easy coincidence between citizenship, religious identity, and the territorial limits of the nation existed. The demand for a Muslim homeland that had pervaded the countdown to Partition, and its tangible success embedded within the establishment of Pakistan, meant that there was an implicit understanding that Muslims would 'naturally' identify with Pakistan, while non-Muslims—Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and others—would automatically become part of India. Consequently, minority Hindus and Muslims who continued living in Pakistan and India after 1947 became what Willem

Van Schendel defines as 'proxy citizens'.⁴⁷ Minority Hindus in East Pakistan, though legally citizens of the Pakistan state, were categorized as putative citizens of the Indian State which endeavoured to ensure their rights and security through agreements and the establishment of institutions such as minority boards. Similarly, newspapers in East Pakistan consistently highlighted the plight of the Muslims in India. Such trans-territorial concerns were integral to the project of nation building even as they belied the limits of distinct nationhood and contradicted the project of secular identities.

For each newly independent state, the security of the minorities within India and East Pakistan became the acid test of legitimate nationhood. Minority migration became central to the game of numerical one-upmanship between India and Pakistan, as each accused the other of creating conditions that stimulated the protracted migration on the eastern border. Both countries evolved processes that sought to quantify the human movement across their mutual border. At one level, the direction and magnitude of the migration indicated the successes and failures of India and East Pakistan to establish their national order. In this game, India claimed a moral edge as the Census of 1951 recorded that more Hindus had migrated there from East Pakistan than did Muslim migrants leave India for East Pakistan. India blamed East Pakistan for not guaranteeing minority right and the latter countered by accusing India of creating 'pull factors' for the East Pakistan Hindus, which went counter to its proclaimed secular identity. Implicit within such accusations was the question of legitimacy predicated on each state's ability to guarantee equal citizenship rights to their respective minorities.

For the East Pakistani authorities, migration of its minorities reflected an intricate weave of loyalty and territory that defined citizenship not by birth but by domicile. Thus, any movement across the border was interpreted as inherently disloyal, destabilizing the new state and siphoning its minimal resources. The very real predicament of establishing the infrastructure for the new East Pakistani state was a potent factor within this equation. In 1948, the East Pakistan state legislated the Evacuee Property Act to assure its minorities that authorities would guard their property and hand it back to them if they returned from India. But by the time of Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, the East Pakistan government changed this legislation, pleading

wartime exigencies that led to the Enemy Property Act of 1965. As the name suggests, this law usurped the very property that it had, in the earlier decade, claimed to protect. The historical trajectory of this metamorphosis highlights the critical connections between state processes and minority dislocation in post-Partition Bengal.

The chronic and prolonged nature of the migration from the east illustrates that even as minorities in West Bengal and East Pakistan developed into trans-territorial citizens in the eyes of each state, such identities remained negotiable at the individual level. Hindu and Muslim minorities identified with the state of their co-religionists only under extreme circumstances when they perceived that their territorial nation could not guarantee their citizenship rights in the face of threats from extra-state actors. Thus, for East Pakistani Hindus, migration was not always predicated on permanent uprooting but on the belief that they would be able to retain their kinship and social ties with their ancestral homes. They were also following the traditional pattern of urban-rural migration that took place in the region during colonial times. In the past, there had been the possibility of return. However, the requirements of post-Partition states to define their boundaries and identify their loyal citizens made it almost impossible for the continuance of such ties. Similarly, within the communally charged environment of India's relations with the princely states of Kashmir and Hyderabad in 1947-8, the issue of loyalty became controversial for the minority Muslims of West Bengal. As members of a community that had been closely connected with the demand for Pakistan, they easily became the usual suspects in regard to anti-state activities. The Bengal Partition, thus, generated a unique form of trans-territoriality where national citizenship was defined by domicile, but religious community defined proxy citizenship. This duality reinforced the marginality of minorities as loyal citizens of their territorial nation.

THE NATION'S BORDERLANDS

The establishment of international borders was the *sine qua non* of the Partition enterprise. The impossible task of determining a border in six weeks to accommodate religious demography was delegated to Cyril Radcliffe, a British civil servant with little knowledge of the Indian subcontinent. Radcliffe was the chairman of the five-member Boundary Commission which was hampered by unclear and contradictory terms

of reference.⁴⁸ The conflicting claims of the leading political parties and a restricted schedule of six weeks made their task more difficult.

Although maps are essential tools of knowledge and control, defining not only topography but also the conceptual nation,⁴⁹ the new borders and their creation in 1947 have since been peripheral both within political discourses on nation building and, until recently, within scholarly accounts. Ironically, within post-1947 South Asia, accurate maps were largely non-existent because India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh restricted and continue to restrict public access to maps under claims of national security. Such cartographic anxieties, whose underlying fear is that of national disintegration, are clearly a legacy of the Partition. Despite such difficulties, recent studies have managed to elaborate on the uncertainty and confusion that were fundamental to the establishment of the line of division.⁵⁰ Expediency rather than accuracy guided British decolonization efforts in 1947. Thus, the accuracy of colonial maps and the basic realities of the ultimate border mattered less than the façade that the Boundary Commission had deliberated and resolved issues along democratic principles.⁵¹ The process of creating the border encompassed both the desire for an honourable withdrawal on the part of the British and the first steps among Indian and Pakistani leaders to map the contours of their respective nations. The final determination thus reflected the political and personal imperatives of those who were intimately connected with its deliberation.⁵²

Not surprisingly, the boundary awards, published two days after 15 August 1947, failed to meet most expectations and unsettled the regional societies of Punjab and Bengal. Recent scholarship has begun to trace the impact of the border on the lives of those living in and around the border, and have questioned the claims of 'closed' national boundaries by focusing on the movement of border dwellers which continuously tested the irrevocability of political boundaries. The porosity of borders, especially the one in divided Bengal, meant that there was a gap between the rhetoric of border maintenance, of its absoluteness and success in excluding and including certain groups, and the reality of life at the border. Scholars such as Schendel and Baud have urged for a focus on the borderland as a unit of analysis rather than only the border.⁵³ An examination of borderlands as a site of interaction and negotiation between people from both

sides serves as an important corrective to the unchanging and linear representation of the border on maps. Further, the borderland defined itself as a vibrant site of economic activity even as the new nation states endeavoured to criminalize such activities. In divided Bengal, the border simultaneously evolved as a barrier to work and a site of new employment for state-appointed officials, militias, and armed forces who were called upon to guard the new national frontiers.⁵⁴

Borders generally define both the origin and the territorial limits of imagined national communities. After Partition, identities at the periphery had to simultaneously negotiate the emergence of the South Asian region as a 'unified' entity⁵⁵ and the reflexive nationalisms that critically depended on each other for self-definition. In the case of the Bengal border, there was no clear correlation between territory and national identity. Identities were *produced* not so much by the physical location of the border but more due to India and Pakistan's attempt to control the movement of border crossers. This book focuses on the emergence of a document regime of passports, visas, migration certificates, and refugee slips which aimed to count and classify border crossers into different categories of belonging vis-à-vis the new nation states. Thus, border crossers now could be officially classified as temporary or permanent migrants, refugees, infiltrators, aliens, or as citizens depending on what kind of documentation they were able to obtain. Those who crossed without documentation faced the possibility of deportation but that happened rarely in the first few decades after the Partition. While the emergence of documentary identity at the border was similar to processes in Europe after the First World War⁵⁶ where such documents were central to the emergence of citizenship, different conditions in Bengal entailed that these documents held a more utilitarian value to the border crossers even as India and Pakistan hoped to equate some of these documents with citizenship.

In Bengal, there was no 'natural' succession of laws to control the border once the line had been drawn on the map. In contrast to the western boundary, Indian authorities in New Delhi and Calcutta did not view an 'open' Bengal border as a threat to India's security. The Bengal border thus evolved primarily as an economic frontier immediately after 1947, and remained legally open until 1952 when the continuous migration of East Bengali Hindu refugees who demanded the 'right' to rehabilitation from India led the Indian

government to take action to close the border in the east. The need to control this 'unending trail' ensured that by the mid-1950s, the border assumed territorial sanctity in official discourse and action. This book argues that the processes of delineating the political and territorial jurisdiction of the nation state enabled the emergence of national identity as the principal axis of state control over mobility and citizenship.

SOURCES AND PARAMETERS

'Destroyed by white ants and water'—this was one of the many similar descriptive entries in one of the catalogues at the State Archives in West Bengal.⁵⁷ Although only sixty years old, documents relating to the post-Partition period in India and Bangladesh have remained inaccessible partly because some files continue to be restricted to the researchers, partly because records were dispersed to different archives and libraries after 1947, and partly because of the deteriorating conditions in these archives which ensure that termites become responsible for destroying both papers and histories of three nations. Researching for this book took me to numerous archives across four countries in Bangladesh, India, the United Kingdom and the United States. Archival sources in Bangladesh and India are fragmented, erratic, kept in dilapidated archival storage in different cities, and sometimes in different locations of the same city. Representing the fractured beginnings of India and Pakistan, these sources primarily comprise 'official' voices: files containing memos, legislations, official directives of various ministries in India, East Pakistan, and Britain which kept up a healthy interest in its erstwhile Indian empire; local police records which noted movements and activities of 'suspicious elements'; parliamentary debates recording differing opinions of legislators; and private papers of the principal political parties.

But read closely, one finds that these official files contain 'unofficial' voices, of ordinary people who sent in letters, memoranda, and petitions to their official and political representatives demanding amelioration of their particular grievances within the context of becoming new citizens. These hitherto ignored voices reflect and represent the *experience* of Partition as much as government records and high politics dictated its official trajectory. Although both official and unofficial records come with their attendant epistemological problems, I have attempted to read them 'against the grain', to

highlight the contingent conditions under which ordinary citizens of India and East Pakistan lived and experienced post-Partition projects of the two nations. In conjunction with personal memoirs and oral narratives that were recorded in the 1960s, such sources provide us with the *mentality* of the post-Partition period. Further, when read as a dialogue between ordinary citizens and state policies, such sources provide insights into the nature and limits of state-society relations in post-colonial South Asia.

Newspaper reports and police records have been invaluable sources in piecing together the arc of India and Pakistan's official policies and public statements on various issues relating to border disputes, acts of violence, riots, and refugee relief. Further, newspapers also published letters from concerned individuals who used them as a public forum to raise awareness and share opinion on specific issues. Although such sources come with their own set of issues regarding veracity and were sometimes clearly embellished accounts, I have used them not for factual data but as records indicating the multiple possibilities and contingencies that existed within the contemporary public sphere. Given the constraints of the recorded sources, this book draws on the border between West Bengal and East Pakistan as representative of the border experiences between 1947 and 1965.⁵⁸

Further, it examines post-Partition legislations that did not always have a parallel correspondence in both India and East Pakistan. For example, the Evacuee Property Act was in operation in East Pakistan but India's Evacuee Property Act did not include areas in Bengal and Assam, primarily because the official expectation at the time of Partition was that there would be very little migration and hence no need for rehabilitation on the eastern side.

Because Partition elicited a divided Pakistan, for the sake of this study, I have used 'East Pakistan' to denote the geographical entity and used Pakistan and the Government of East Pakistan interchangeably to denote its official stature. I have used the term 'East Bengal' to correctly denote the same region up until 1956 when it officially became 'East Pakistan'. The Pakistan central government was located and concerned primarily with legislations and politics in West Pakistan and for most purposes, East Pakistan dealt with its inter dominion relations with India on its own. However, this is not to say that it had much say or influence on how national Pakistani policy was framed.

The book is divided into three thematic sections, each containing two chapters. The first section focuses on the theme of territories—both the delineation of a national border in Bengal and the diverse ways in which India and Pakistan sought to control movement across this border. On 3 June 1947, political leaders in India and Britain informed their citizens that India would gain independence by 1948 and would also be partitioned into two nations, namely, India and Pakistan. Within days of this momentous announcement, the date of independence was brought forward to 14–15 August 1947. The blueprint for decolonization and independence required the setting up of a Boundary Commission to establish a new national border. Chapter 1 examines in detail the deliberations of both the officially constituted Boundary Commission and the public debates surrounding its inception. It contends that even though the logic of the Partition demand was predicated on religious demography, the public and political demands for territory had little to do with communal concerns. The new border drawn at independence failed miserably both at separating Hindus from Muslims and as a distinct marker of national jurisdiction.

Although it was clearly defined on paper by August 1947, the border dividing Bengal took shape over the next two decades. Confusion about its location and its power to demarcate national sovereignty meant border conflicts over territory, livestock, and people; smuggled goods became a common feature of border life almost immediately. Simultaneously, India and Pakistan attempted to control refugee movements by requiring new documents such as passports, visas, and refugee slips as measures to classify and tabulate those who crossed the border. Chapter 2 explores the emergence and constitution of this *document regime* characterized by new forms of marking identity. Pieces of paper were the means of controlling and categorizing persons who legally wanted to cross the new international border. It was thus at the periphery that these nation states began to exercise their newly won sovereign powers, as they sought to decide who could and could not enter their territorial boundaries.

The second section examines the processes of nation building in the aftermath of the Partition which engendered and crafted new forms of citizenship, new ways of belonging to the new nations. The post-Partition period raised critical questions about national belonging: who

was an Indian and who was a Pakistani?; and on what basis were these questions to be resolved? Chapter 3 focuses on the Evacuee Property Act of 1951, promulgated in East Pakistan. It examines how the Act framed and complicated the ideas of citizenship amongst those who were primarily affected by its rulings, namely, the minority Hindus. The Act allowed the Pakistan state to requisition the property of those whom it viewed as potential evacuees to India. Further, by placing restrictions on items such as gold, foreign exchange, and even livestock, the Act redefined the very notion of property, and linked the rights of citizenship with property ownership and nationality.

The act of migration, even if temporary, served to define one's nationality. It came to be seen as an indication of one's intent to acquire a new citizenship and to relinquish one's original identity. In this process, the same person could be designated an *evacuee* in one country and a *refugee* in another. Neither term guaranteed citizenship rights. Chapter 4 examines the Citizenship of India Bill, and the official and public debates surrounding it, in order to trace the development of the idea of legal citizenship in India. It argues that continued migration from the east (rather than the west) forced the architects of the Act to confront the modalities of defining a 'citizen' and to formulate rules that would directly impact the refugees from East Pakistan and aid in their transformation to Indians.

The third section addresses the theme of identities, specifically those of minorities and refugees. Minorities in each nation faced questions about their supranational identities and had to justify their decision to remain in their ancestral localities. Religious identity collided with national identity, as minorities in India and Pakistan became trans-territorial citizens who resided in one nation but were alleged to profess loyalty to the other nation, the home of their religious brethren. Essentially, this was manifested through routine, small-scale violence that specifically targeted minorities in each country. Chapter 5 calls for a redefinition of the current paradigmatic view of Partition-generated violence as being large scale and primarily physical. Rather, in the case of divided Bengal, Partition violence was daily, small-scale, and often transmuted through psychological threats, both verbal and written. The routine of violence continued for two decades after 1947 and engendered migration across borders both to and from India.

Partition created another category of people: refugees or the displaced. In the case of Bengal, as Chapter 6 shows, the Indian State operated on the belief that migration from East Pakistan was unwarranted and temporary. Rehabilitation policies thus were ad hoc, limited, and had the expectation that refugees would be able to self-rehabilitate, albeit with the help of Indian State. In the light of policy failure, it was easy for the emergence of a paradoxical entity: the Bengali refugee, who was lazy yet pioneering, shorn of agency yet subversive, and who clung on to his 'refugee' identity yet demanded the rights of citizenship.

The following chapters hope to present an analysis of how India and East Pakistan engaged with their post-Partition predicaments that had to square the needs of building distinctive nations and nationalities with the realities of lack of resources, imperfect and erratic legislations, and continuous movement of people and goods which tested the limits of each nation. Categorization of their people into citizens and foreigners was a necessary part of their nationalizing projects. It also hopes to present the story of how ordinary people on both sides of the Radcliffe line, such as Laila Ahmed, were impacted by such nationalizing projects and how they reacted, adopted, negotiated, and often ignored such classifications. Luckily for Laila, the Indian authorities allowed her to stay on with her parents on 'compassionate grounds'⁵⁹ until the Citizenship Act was passed and she could acquire Indian citizenship.

NOTES

1. Indian Citizenship of Foreigners, 1955, No file no., Sl. no. 8, Home (Political) Confidential, West Bengal State Archives (henceforth WBSA), Calcutta.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Internal memo to Chief Secretary, 26 February 1953 (*ibid.*).

4. There are varying assessments on the exact numbers. According to Government of India estimates, 4.5 million Sikhs and Hindus left their homes in West Punjab and migrated to India and 5.5 million Muslims moved from different parts of India to West Pakistan (India [Dominion] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1948, *After Partition*, New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, p. 50). In Bengal, the Government of India's Census of 1961 recorded around 3 million displaced non-Muslims from East Pakistan. A million-and-half Muslims left West Bengal for East Pakistan in the

two decades after the Partition. See Joya Chatterji, 2005, 'Of Graveyards and Ghettos: Muslims in Partitioned West Bengal, 1947-67', in Mushirul Hasan and Asim Roy (eds), *Living Together Separately: Cultural India in History and Politics*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 228.

5. Partha Chatterjee uses this term to describe the Nehruvian project of the nation state which began in the 1930s and found fruition after 1947. See Partha Chatterjee, 1991, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

6. Sarah Ansari, 2005, *Life after Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh, 1947-1962*, Karachi: Oxford University Press; Joya Chatterji, 2007, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and Vazira Zamindar, 2007, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories*, New York: Columbia University Press.

7. Gyanendra Pandey, 2001, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India*, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 17.

8. Gyanendra Pandey, 1994, 'The Prose of Otherness', in David Hardiman and David Arnold (eds), *Subaltern Studies, Volume VIII*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 188-221.

9. Fuelled by the publication of the N. Mansergh and E.W.R. Lumby (eds), 1977, *Constitutional Relations Between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power, 1942-7, Vol. 1-12*, London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office., historical scholarship on the endgames of empire and the Partition began to emerge from the 1970s. For varied empirical analyses on the causes of Partition, see Ajit Bhattacharjea, 1997, *Countdown to Partition: The Final Days*, New Delhi: HarperCollins; Robin Moore, 1983, *Escape from Empire: The Attlee Government and the Indian Problem*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press; David Page, 1982, *Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control, 1920-1932*, New Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press; Anita Inder Singh, 1987, *The Origins of Partition of India, 1936-1947*, New Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press.

10. Writing on the Partition began as early as 1947 itself, in the form of official inquiries, memoirs, and eyewitness accounts by British and Indian officials. For example, see M.A.K. Azad, 1960, *India Wins Freedom*, New York: Longmans, Green and Co.; A. Campbell-Johnson, 1953, *Mission with Mountbatten*, New York: Dutton; M.L. Darling, 1949, *At Freedom's Door*, London: Oxford University Press; G.D. Khosla, 1949, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press; V.P. Menon, 1957, *The Transfer of Power in India*, Bombay: Orient Longman; P. Moon, 1961, *Divide and Quit: An Eyewitness Account of the Partition of India*, London: Oxford University Press; and Sir Francis Tucker, 1950, *While Memory Serves*, London: Cassel. Most of these books received a new lease of

life as reprints became easily available to the public in South Asia in the late 1980s and the 1990s. Their popularity confirms the idea that narratives of the Partition continue to capture and inform the public imagination.

11. See S. Gopal, 1975, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, London: J. Cape; Ayesha Jalal, 1985, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and B.R. Nanda, 1958, *Mahatma Gandhi: A Biography*, London and Boston: Allen & Unwin and Beacon Press. The Indian government aided the project by the publication of personal writings of Gandhi. See 1958–73, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India; S. Gopal (ed.), 1972, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, New Delhi: Orient Longman; and Z.H. Zaidi (ed.), 1993, *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah Papers*, Islamabad: National Archives of Pakistan.

12. For the broad trends in the Partition historiography, see Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, 2000, 'Introduction: The Place of Partition in South Asian Histories', in *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 1–28.

13. Jinnah's control over Bengali politicians such as Fazlul Haq and H.S. Suhrawardy was tenuous at best. For differences between the All India Muslim League and the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, see Shila Sen, 1976, *Muslim Politics in Bengal, 1937–1947*, New Delhi: Impex India, and Harun-or-Rashid, 2003, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh: Bengali Muslim League and Muslim Politics, 1906–47*, Dhaka: Dhaka University Press.

14. The coalition politics that ensued after the All India Congress failed to capitalize on their win in the provincial elections of 1937 has been seen also as a lost opportunity for Hindu–Muslim unity in Bengal politics. Harun-or-Rashid argues that the failure of a Congress–League coalition after the 1946 elections prepared the ground for increasing communal hostility.

15. For a detailed critique of 'communalism', see Ayesha Jalal, 1997, 'Exploding Communalism: The Politics of Identity in South Asia', in Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal (eds), *Nationalism, Democracy, and Development: State and Politics in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 76–103.

16. Chatterji traces the proliferation of communalism in Bengal thus, 'Nationalism was directed against imperialism and gave top priority to anti-British action. The communalism of the *bhadralok* was directed against their fellow Bengalis. History for the one was the struggle against British liberation from the despotism of Muslims. Its key political objective was to prevent this "despotism" from returning when the British left India, and to deny that Muslims could be Bengalis, and by extension Indians.' See Joya Chatterji, 1994, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932–1947*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 268.

17. In an attempt to provide agency to the colonized, Chatterji argues, 'Bengalis were not passive bystanders in the partition of their province; nor were they victims of circumstances entirely out of their control, forced reluctantly to accept the division of their "motherland". On the contrary, a large number of Hindus of Bengal, backed up by the provincial branches of the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha, campaigned intensively in 1947 for the partition of Bengal inside an Indian Union' (*ibid.*, p. 227).

18. Other historians of Bengal have argued for a successful synthesis between elite and popular communalism in the Bengal countryside that found culmination in the 1946 riots, for example, Suranjan Das, 1991, *Communal Riots in Bengal, 1905-1947*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Here, too, is an argument for the unilinear path of communalism, this time of Muslim communalism, that makes Partition inevitable.

19. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, 1997, *Caste, Protest and Identity in Colonial India: The Namasudras of Bengal, 1872-1947*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press.

20. Taj ul-Islam Hashmi, 1992, *Pakistan as a Peasant Utopia: The Communalization of Class Politics in East Bengal, 1920-1947*, Boulder: Westview Press.

21. Sugata Bose, 2001, 'Between Monolith and Fragment: A Note on Historiography of Nationalism in Bengal', in Sekhar Bandyopadhyay (ed.), *Bengal: Rethinking History, Essays in Historiography*, New Delhi: Manohar, p. 288.

22. Sugata Bose, 1993, *The New Cambridge History of India: Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 142.

23. M. Anisuzzaman, 1993, *Creativity, Reality, Identity*, Dhaka: International Centre for Bengal Studies, University Press Limited.

24. The erasure of the Partition of 1947 is stark in its omission within the three volumes of Sirajul Islam (ed.), 1992, *History of Bangladesh, 1704-1971*, Vols 1-3, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh. The only essay within the first volume which deals partially with the Partition is by Ahmed Kamal, 'East Bengal at Independence', Sirajul Islam (ed.), *History of Bangladesh, 1704-1941*, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bengal, pp. 407-35.

25. E.P. Thompson defines experience as "'the mental and emotional response, whether of a individual, or of a group, to many interrelated events or to many repetitions of the same kind of events'. See E.P. Thompson, 1995, *The Poverty of Theory or an Orrey of Errors*, London: Merlin Press, p. 7.

26. Urvasi Butalia, 2000, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, Dürham, NC: Duke University Press; Veena Das, 1990, *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990; Mushirul Hasan (ed.), 1993, *India's Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilization*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press; Suvir Kaul, 2001, *Partitions*

of *Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India*, New Delhi: Permanent Black; Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, 1998, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*, New Delhi: Kali; Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh (eds), 1999, *Region and Partition: Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the Subcontinent*, Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.

27. Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*; and Menon and Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries*.

28. Pandey, *Remembering Partition*.

29. See Ansari, *Life after Partition*; Yasmin Khan, 2007, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Ian Talbot, 2006, *Divided Cities: Partition and its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar, 1947–1957*, Karachi: Oxford University Press.

30. Shabnum Tejani, 2008, *Indian Secularism: A Social and Intellectual History, 1890-1950*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

31. Zamindar, *The Long Partition*.

32. There was no permit system in Bengal and the evacuee property legislations only operated in East Pakistan.

33. Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition*, pp. 159–208.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 105–58.

35. Few academic scholars find it problematic to use the Punjab experience as the quintessential Partition experience. Some have problematized it briefly. See Mushirul Hasan, 1998, 'Memories of a Fragmented Nation: Rewriting the Histories of India's Partition', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 33, no. 41, 10 October, p. 2662–8; Menon and Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries*, p. 12; and Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, p. 18. Of the most recent works on Partition and its aftermath, the focus remains firmly on the north. Even the recent works which proclaim to focus on the Partition experience in general, exhibit a clear bias towards the western Partition. See Khan, *The Great Partition*; and Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, 2009, *The Partition of India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

36. In its examination of the Partition experience, recent scholarship has broadened its enquiry to include the processes that went into the making of post-1947 nation states. For example, see Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition*; Lucy Chester, 2009, *Borders and Conflict in South Asia: The Radcliffe Boundary Commission and the Partition of Punjab*, Manchester: Manchester University Press; and Zamindar, *The Long Partition*.

37. Md. Mahbubar Rahman and Willem Van Schendel, 2003, "'I am Not a Refugee": Rethinking Partition Migration', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 551–84.

38. See Srirupa Roy, 2007, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Post-Colonial Nationalism*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, pp. 66–104.

39. Ayesha Jalal, 1990, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 3
40. Willem Van Schendel, 2009, *A History of Bangladesh*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 135–7.
41. Zamindar argues that Muslims who had temporarily migrated from India to Pakistan after 1947 were prevented from returning to their homes due to the implementation of the permit system by India (see Zamindar, *The Long Partition*, pp. 85–96).
42. Here I follow, in modified form, Joel Migdal's argument that people who implement policies at the local level have an important effect on the nature of the state. He notes, 'The indirect impact of politics of survival upon them, their centrality to the implementation of politics, and the calculus of social and political pressures they face have placed them in a critical role to influence whether states can actually accomplish what their leaders purport'. See Joel S. Migdal, 1988, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State–Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 238.
43. In another context, Myron Weiner, talking about India's experience with policy implementation notes, 'The system gave a great deal of power to the individuals at the local level who were often able to impede the carrying out of national policies'. See Myron Weiner, 1977, 'Motilal, Jawaharlal, Indira and Sanjay in India's Political Transformation', in Richard J. Samuels (ed.), *Political Generations and Political Development*, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, p. 72.
44. Rogers Brubaker, 1992, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 22.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
46. This date was initially fixed at July 1948, less than a year after the Partition.
47. Willem Van Schendel, 2002, 'Stateless in South Asia: The Making of the India–Bangladesh Enclaves', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 61, no. 1, February, p. 127.
48. Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, 2000, 'The Making of South Asian Borders', in *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia*, pp. 78–100.
49. Focusing on the British cartographic enterprise in early nineteenth century India, Mathew Edney argues that the colonialists sought to describe an imperial conception of *British India*. 'British India which was otherwise a quite arbitrary entity was naturalized by the British to be a constant timeless "natural" uniform geographical entity, political nation and cultural state.' Mathew Edney, 1997, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765–1843*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 334.
50. See Joya Chatterji, 1999, 'The Fashioning of a Frontier: The Radcliffe Line and Bengal's Border Landscape, 1947–52', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 33,

no. 1, pp. 185–242; Chester, *Borders and Conflict in South Asia*; and Willem Van Schendel, 2005, *The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State and Nation in South Asia*, London: Anthem.

51. Chester, *Borders and Conflict in South Asia*.

52. Joya Chatterji, 'The Fashioning of a Frontier', p. 213.

53. Michiel Baud and Willem Van Schendel, 1997, 'Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands', *Journal of World History*, vol. 8, no. 2, p. 220.

54. See Willem Van Schendel, 2001, 'Working through Partition: Making a Living in the Bengal Borderlands', *International Review of Social History*, vol. 46, no. 3, December, pp. 393–421.

55. Ranabir Samaddar, 1997, 'The History that Partition Creates', in Ranabir Samaddar (ed.), *Reflections on Partition in the East*, Calcutta: Vikas, pp. 10–11.

56. John C. Torpey, 2000, *The Invention of the Passport, Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

57. WBSA, Writers' Building, Calcutta, accessed March 2007.

58. The post-Partition experience in Assam has been dealt with in detail in Sanjib Baruah, 1999, *India against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

59. Indian authorities had a specific category of permits on compassionate grounds which entitled people of 'old age, infirmity, illness, women and minor children who are dependent on Indian citizens' to remain in India on a semi-permanent basis. Such regulations were clearly guided by the patriarchal stance of the Indian State that sought to differentiate between able male petitioners and those that needed its protection.